

MICHIGAN COMMISSION ON SERVICES TO THE AGING MEETING

**Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Aging and Adult Services Agency
300 E. Michigan Ave., 3rd Fl.; Lansing, MI 48933
November 20, 2015 @9:00 AM**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Wishart called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Commissioner LaTosch.

COMMISSION ROLL CALL

The Commission roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Dona Wishart, Matthew Adeyanju, Sibyl Ellis, Gerald Irby, Kathleen LaTosch, Harold Mast, Donna Murray-Brown, Richard Ortega, Jeffery Schade, Michael Sheehan and Kristie Zamora, with Michael Burri and Reneé Reid-Smith joining via conference call.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT (excused)

Joan Ilardo.

AGING AND ADULT SERVICES AGENCY (AASA) STAFF PRESENT

Kari Sederburg, Shirley Bentsen, Dan Doezema, Carol Dye, Wendi Middleton, Sarah Slocum, Sally Steiner, Scott Wamsley, and interns Victoria Adams and Jennifer Onwenu.

VISITORS/GUESTS PRESENT

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Wishart asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Irby to approve the agenda. Commissioner Adeyanju seconded the motion. This motion was approved unanimously with a voice vote.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

Commissioner Wishart asked for a motion to approve the October 16, 2015, minutes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ellis to approve the minutes. Commissioner Ortega seconded the motion. This motion was approved unanimously with a voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS

None.

COMMISSION CHAIR REPORT

Commissioner Wishart stated Commissioner Ilardo is presenting at the Gerontological Society of America conference, and she also attended a healthy aging idea lab in Ann Arbor, which was put on by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, to look at being change agents along with grant makers. They will begin to hold planning strategic sessions in January.

Commissioner Wishart attended the State Advisory Council on Aging meeting to represent the Commission, noting Commissioner Sheehan provided excellent leadership, and staff members and advocates were very passionate about their work, adding their charge is the direct care workforce. An update is forthcoming and is a hot topic at Federal, State and local levels.

Commissioner Wishart noted National Rural Health Day was recently announced, noting Michigan has 57 rural counties - communities that are home to over 60 hospitals, hundreds of certified rural health clinics and emergency medical services agencies that provide healthcare to their residents.

Commissioner Wishart stated Commissioner Zamora invited Commissioner LaTosch and Dan Doezema to the November 5th Oakland County Creating Age-Friendly Communities Program, which was a very powerful meeting, and is in line with the Michigan Communities For a Lifetime Project.

Commissioner Wishart asked to hold May 11, 2016, for the Older Michiganiaan's Day event being held on the State Capitol lawn, as an opportunity to discuss issues with legislators and to celebrate older adults and their accomplishments.

AGING AND ADULT SERVICES AGENCY (AASA) DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Sederburg stated the AASA deputy director position was posted, and there's been about 100 applicants; interviews are planned, and she hopes to fill the position soon.

Director Sederburg stated AASA is still in discussions around the merger, noting the new Medicaid Director, Chris Priest and AASA are in talks about areas of alignment on long term care supports and services.

Director Sederburg stated MDHHS is looking at pilots intended to provide the ability to call one number for information on a number of services without having to call multiple agencies.

Director Sederburg asked Wendi Middleton to provide an overview of the LEAN project.

Ms. Middleton stated the LEAN project is the result of a federal grant to AASA to conduct a plan in one year to devise a three-year plan to reinvent long term supports and services using a no wrong door model for the entire state, with the goal to coordinate all services through one call, instead of having to go to several different agencies, through value stream mapping. This process maps out the "as is" process, how it works now from the point where people access services, to the point of when they actually receive the services, and all steps in between. Once that process is mapped out, ideas for improvements are mapped, then values are mapped. This initiative identified 1800 process steps with over 500 areas of

concern, resulting in 700 issues and ideas for improvement. The LEAN process, now in Phase II, is to continue the processes and priorities, as determined through discussions with the LEAN team consisting of MDHHS management and other departmental stakeholders, who will act as design teams to plan the improvements and implement the ideas through short term pilots.

Director Sederburg asked Sarah Slocum, AASA's State Long Term Care Ombudsman, for an update on the recent discontinuation of ombudsman services through Adult Wellbeing Services (AWBS).

Ms. Slocum stated AWBS previously provided ombudsman services for Region 5 in Flint, Region 8 in Grand Rapids, Region 14 in Muskegon, and Region 4 in the SW corner of the state. All ombudsmen staff were transitioned into other agencies with no breaks in service.

Director Sederburg stated AASA continues to work on the approved Request for Proposal to house the State Long Term Care Ombudsman office outside of AASA.

Director Sederburg stated AASA has expanded and is currently working on revamping our mission and vision statements, and she asked Shirley Bentsen, AASA staff to discuss.

Ms. Bentsen provided an overview of the redrafted mission, vision and value statements and the ongoing process, and she invited comments and input from commissioners.

Director Sederburg announced Ferris State University is planning a conference on aging from April 7-9, 2016, and Commissioner Adeyanju invited commissioners.

INFORMATION AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Director Sederburg provided an update on current and ongoing legislative issues, including information on the road funding bill that was recently signed into law.

Commissioner Irby discussed the Dark Stores initiative. Lowe's appealed their property's assessed value to the Marquette Tax Tribunal to receive larger tax breaks and won so they'll receive a huge tax refund, which will come from essential services like the library, school district, and fire department, who are on the hook to pay for it. Commissioner Irby said as time goes on, it's costing local governments and services, and it affects the senior population, with his local senior center losing \$34,000 because of this issue, noting Senator Casperson is working to get this into committee for legislation to address this matter.

Commissioner Wishart asked commissioners who plan to discuss this with their legislators, to make them aware, this issue also impacts senior services.

Commissioner Murray-Brown stated there are conversations around the National Service Programs at the federal level of an imminent cut to the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) that will impact the RSVP programs, and in some cases some may have to close their doors, noting there are opportunities to make comments to Senator Blunt, that

we believe these programs remaining fully funded is very important to the communities and the individuals served, that the Commission has repeatedly heard from.

Commissioner Wishart stated this CNCS alert just came out, noting an informational phone number, (800) 998-0180, adding if this funding is lost, there's a risk to Older Americans Act programs and services, Medicare state health insurance assistance programs, fall prevention and chronic disease self-management.

Director Sederburg stated AASA has heard from some of the local programs who are starting to ramp up their advocacy efforts, who recognize how these cuts will be very detrimental to their programs.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Scott Wamsley, AASA staff, provided a handout on AASA's expenditures, and an update on state and federal budget and finances. A grid is being built that will list grants, their funding source, grantees and amounts granted, and will be provided to commissioners.

BUSINESS ITEMS (Part 1)

Request for Approval of Creating Confident Caregivers® Master Trainer Re-Certifications

Sally Steiner, AASA staff, introduced two of AASA's social worker interns, Jennifer Onwenu from MSU, and Victoria Adkins from U of M, and both will remain for the academic year.

Ms. Steiner thanked Commissioner LaTosch and Ilardo for participating in the re-certification process, and she provided an overview of the Creating Confident Caregivers® (CCC) Master Trainer re-certifications.

Ms. Steiner requested approval of the 16 CCC Master Trainer re-certifications as noted.

A motion was made by Commissioner LaTosch to approve the CCC Master Trainer re-certifications, as presented. Commissioner Irby seconded the motion.

This motion was approved unanimously with a voice vote.

The Commission broke at 10:34 AM and resumed at 10:44 AM.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Discussion on Public Hearing Comments

Commissioner Wishart stated one main concerns has been on direct care workforce issues and labor issues involved that the State Advisory Council (SAC) on Aging is working on.

Commissioner Irby stated although the commission can't micromanage, they have the responsibility to conduct due diligence and to advocate on behalf of the public.

Commissioner Wishart said before they left Escanaba in October, Mr. Mead, the UP AAA Director was already investigating the issues brought before the commission on the 2-1-1 system, so when complaints and concerns are raised, they can be addressed immediately.

Commissioner Ortega asked how can issues such as when a cook has to make the home delivered meals, then deliver them on a snowmobile, which is probably a financial issue, be addressed.

Commissioner Wishart stated sometimes it has to be decided that fewer people will be served in order to do it appropriately with regard to funding of wages and agency needs to provide the service, noting it's not always easy to do more with less, so this is something to think about a little further.

Commissioner Murray-Brown stated some of these agencies are non-profit and there needs to be more balance around quality and impact, which is difficult, realizing some people may not get served by those doing everything possible with eroding funding.

Commissioner LaTosch stated with all the direct care worker concerns and issues being addressed by the SAC, she would like to see regular reports on their progress, what the determinations are, and if there are ways the Commission could support them in their work, whether that's comparing how other states are handling this, or other groups or regions that may have come up with solutions.

Commissioner Sheehan stated one of the things they are doing is comparing other states, and some are really good, noting a problem they're running into is they're hearing from private companies that provide direct care workers, and a Traverse City resident who stated he can't make a living while big box stores pay \$15 or minimum wage per hour.

Commissioner Wishart stated information she read from a survey indicated the starting rate per hour for direct care workers in Michigan is \$8.69; the average is \$9.52; compared to big box store's starting wage of \$9 to \$11.50, while direct care workers have very difficult and important work that has value beyond what they are being paid.

Commissioner Reid-Smith stated this is a calling, not a job, and one of the other challenges is if they go into skilled nursing, CMS will reimburse their training, but they do not qualify for any type of student aid because it's not looked at a nursing program, per se. For someone who is entering the workforce or someone reinventing themselves for a second career, that is often undoable, so the challenge she would put out to the workforce agencies across the state is how are they supporting this, or what are they doing to get these people trained, because they have the funds to help with that up front funding.

Commissioner Wishart stated one of the subcommittees on the SAC is focusing on the whole training issue, and she thanked her for her information.

Commissioner Ellis stated she was not aware of the UP 2-1-1 Call Center, and she wants to suggest cost effective solutions, so is there a way field reps can work with local communities to get this information in their newsletters?

Commissioner Wishart stated marketers have said people need to see things, hear things six times, and if they don't have the need, they won't even see it then, so advertising impacts us, but word of mouth as a network can be powerful through information sharing.

Director Sederburg stated some of the challenge with 2-1-1 is in some communities, it works extremely well in the U.P. and Muskegon, where 2-1-1 is housed in the AAA, who has great relationships and referral resources, and in other areas it's maybe not quite as strong, but there are ongoing conversations on how those partnerships are developed that helps to get the information out.

Commissioner Wishart asked the commission to think further about next steps, and if there are particular topics they want to bring to the next meeting, it can be determined if there needs a need for subcommittees around topics, such has been done in the past.

Commissioner Adeyanju asked if those providing testimony are expecting a response.

Commissioner Wishart stated she went afterwards to personally thank and encourage them to stay in contact with the commission.

Commissioner Adeyanju stated when citizens attend public hearings, he thinks they expect something from the commission, and it's an opportunity to refer them back to their AAA for solutions, noting almost all testimonies revolved around resources.

Commissioner Wishart stated in the bigger scheme of things, the Commission can advocate for funding with the Governor, but the question points specifically to should those people who present hear back from the Commission, noting their name and address are recorded and a letter could be sent.

Commissioner Wishart stated the Commission must support the staff and AAAs because it all comes back to them, so that everyone's aware of what's mentioned at the public hearing is the beginning point for solutions.

Commissioner Mast requested the Commission acknowledge those who provide testimony and to provide a referral when required.

BUSINESS ITEMS (Part 2)

Commissioner Wishart asked for a motion to send letters of acknowledgement and a referral if needed to those providing testimony, beginning with the October 16, 2016, public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mast to send letters of acknowledgement and a referral if needed to those providing testimony, beginning with the October 16, 2016, public hearing, as presented. Commissioner Irby seconded the motion.

This motion was approved unanimously with a voice vote.

Director Sederburg stated it's very helpful for her team when they hear from some of the RSVP and other volunteer programs to help guide AASA's discussions with the network.

Commissioner Murray-Brown suggested streamlining the correspondence process, and Director Sederburg stated e-mail and phone number fields could be added to the public comment sheets those providing testimony fill out.

Commissioner Irby stated those providing testimony will also spread the word.

Commissioner Murray-Brown encouraged the Commission to support the values that were discussed today, and to make every effort to talk afterwards with those providing comments.

Update Previously Approved Funding/Grants on Associated Ongoing Activities

None were reported

Multi-Year AIP Process

Scott Wamsley and Dan Doezema provided a detailed overview of the AAA's three-year cycle Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) process.

Advocacy

Commissioner Wishart stated this category is for political policy issues that come up, and advocacy kept coming up, noting at the national level, there's a request to tell Congress to protect and invest in aging services. The Michigan Directors of Services to the Aging are working on their public policy around the question to endorse Senate Bill 352, the CARE Act. The Administration for Community Living is seeking comments on independent living and the proposed rule about that. When aging issues come up at the local and national level, this is when non-partisan information will be shared.

Commissioner Wishart challenged the Commission around public policy and advocacy to visit legislator's offices while in Lansing, although they're currently on break, they have staff, and leave a business card as a way to show presence and begin or continue relationship building as part of our job to be advocates, and what the Governor's staff expects.

Director Sederburg suggested AASA collect and compile all the advocacy alerts received and send them out as one general advocacy FYI, and offered discussion if the Commission wants to talk about taking formal positions on issues.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Commission on Services to the Aging meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, at 9:00 AM on December 18, 2015, at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Adult Services Agency, at this same location. These meetings are open to the public.

The next State Advisory Council on Aging meeting will be held at 9:30 AM on Thursday, March 17, 2016. Commissioner Irby offered to attend to represent the Commission.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Wishart asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Adeyanju. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sheehan. This motion was approved unanimously with a voice vote.

Commissioner Wishart adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM.